

**Gary Allen Senneke DD**  
**Men in Christ Journey – January 2020**

Philippians 3:7-12

*Whatever had been gain to me, I now count as a debit for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as negative because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. It is for his sake that I have suffered the loss of all else, and count them as refuse, so that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based upon the Law, but that rightness which is through Christ's faith, that is a righteousness of God, from faith – I want to know him in the power of his resurrection, that I might fellowship in his sufferings, being conformed to him in his death; so that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. I have not already obtained this nor am I yet complete; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.*

What is hinted at is that we have a choice and that that choice rests on each of us individually. Paul, the prisoner of Christ who is facing his own death, gives us his personal witness. These verses are addressed to those who have already chosen to be Christian and who yet have to make a further decision, which is paralleled in other biblical verses as a decision between living on milk or adult strong meat. Throughout the New Testament, there is reference to a truth that within Christianity there is the choice of the depth of Christian life. Paul will say to a congregation as a whole: *"I could not write to you as spiritual persons, but I must speak to you as babes in Christ. I would like to feed you on solid food, but I must keep nursing you with milk. You are just not ready to handle the strong things of the Lord."* (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)

In the Scriptures as they are given to us, we go on to the deep things by leaving behind the elementary. In Hebrews 3:6 [We are his household, as long as we fearlessly maintain the hope in which we glory.] we are told to hold onto our confidence which we had in the beginning. We are to hold such confidence to the very end. There are elementary truths that we learned as children in the process of our education that ought by now to be automatic. We do not awaken in the morning and need to rehearse the alphabet. Throughout the day we will use the alphabet if for nothing more than to look up an address. Our ABCs are fundamental to living a mature life. Yet rehearsing the ABCs is a sign that we did not learn them properly in the beginning. So it is with Christianity. Parts of our beginning we must live with every day. Confidence must never be taken for granted. Love is another feature of the Christian life that is not simply part of our beginning, but is necessary in every day of life. In the Book of Revelation, Jesus will address the church of Ephesus and say, *"I have this against you. You have abandoned your first love. Return to the works again that you did in the beginning."* By this he reaffirms that the love given to us in the new birth is a love that must dominate every aspect of life, including our ministry. We carry on our lives as believers in the compassion of Christ.

By the measure of grace that we have received in salvation we are launched on a life which must expand and grow deeper to make us sufficient for the future. If we are to build a great house of faith, we must do more than lay foundations. In other words, we must not be constantly repenting of sin. We are to move beyond sin into the life of Christ. We are not to constantly review our baptism. Our baptism was an introduction to the church, and we must now live as a result of being baptized. We are not to give ourselves to constant study of the dispensations of the laying on of hands. The power and ministry of the church must become an automatic part of our lives, exercised by us who have been made part of Christ. I believe that the mad passion of modern Christians for the study of second coming, resurrection, and judgment ought to be reviewed in the light of this passage. But we must ask, "What are the deeper things?" Hebrews 6:1-3 NASB *Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permits.*